

## Plastics: Know Your Place in the Community

### Greenprint Forum Event Report

06.09.2018



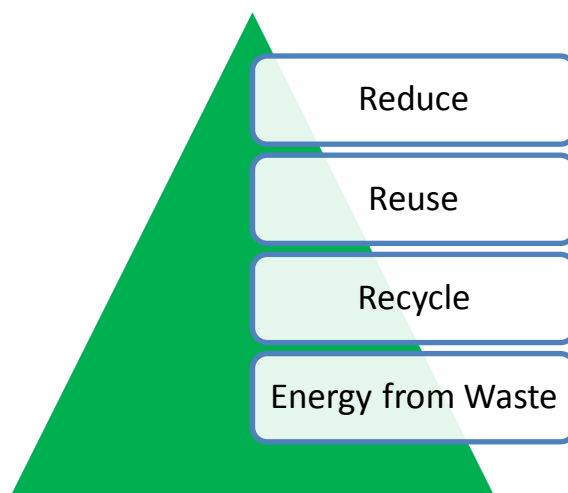
We had attendees from ten different organisations and engaged with approximately 50 people, some inside the venue and some on the street outreach. We picked and sorted 24.7kg of litter and managed to reclaim 0.36kg of that for recycling. Norse collected the waste for us and the recycling was taken by the Sustainability Officer to rinse and add to her recycling.

#### Key take home messages

1. We're not enemies of the plastic industry. Plastics have a lot of positive applications; it's lightweight, cheap and is essential to the medical and technology industries. The plastics industry plays an important role in the economy of East Anglia. Over 3,900 people in Norfolk and Suffolk are employed in the plastics industry. We are here to help people to reduce wastage of plastics and its leakage into the natural environment.
2. Plastics made from plant materials still should not be released into nature and currently cannot be added to your doorstep green waste collection. This is for two key reasons:

- a) They are currently impossible to tell apart from plastics made from fossil fuels without manually looking at labelling on each one and this is not a cost effective solution for the waste industry.
  - b) They still take time to be mineralized to carbon dioxide and water and still need the right conditions to do so. Unless they and all additives within the product are certified as compostable (will fragment and mineralization will complete within a given period at the conditions required for the degradation of bio-waste (e.g. grass, household waste)) fragments will still be present after composting and represent hazards when released.
3. The issue of plastic pollution is global and communities across the world are making efforts to reduce plastic waste on land and sea despite the huge challenges that they face.
  4. You can reduce the chance of plastics entering water courses and boost community pride by organising, taking part in local litter picks or just picking up litter as you see it (always make sure you are not putting yourself at risk of harm when doing this). If you want to organise a litter pick do remember to seek support, plan it well, deliver it and report on it. Please note that Norse can help with community litter pick collections in Suffolk Coastal and Waveney but only until 1pm Monday to Friday, so bear this in mind when organising your pick.
  5. Most storm drains have a very limited filtration system, if any at all. Waste that falls into these drains may end up being channelled directly into local watercourses and possibly out into the sea. Cigarette butts are commonly dropped on streets and get washed into these drains. They contain plastics and chemicals which research shows are toxic to marine and freshwater species. You can help by not dropping butts if you smoke and encouraging others you know to do the same.
  6. You can also help the global situation by reducing your consumption of single or short term use plastics. Where it can't be avoided you can help by ensuring it is kept in use as long as possible, then recycled or sent to energy from waste. If you're based in Suffolk, you can find out exactly what can be recycled where on the following website: <http://www.greensuffolk.org/recycling/a-z-of-recycling/>
  7. Items that can't be recycled at home may be able to be recycled using Terracycle. There are numerous Terracycle collection points across the UK which take in items ranging from biscuit wrappers to cigarettes. Find your nearest Terracycle using the following link: [https://www.terracycle.co.uk/en-GB/about-terracycle/drop\\_off\\_locations](https://www.terracycle.co.uk/en-GB/about-terracycle/drop_off_locations)

**Always consider the waste hierarchy before buying or disposing of items**



**The stall holders:**

1. [Essex and Suffolk Water](#) – The local trading name for Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) which is one of ten regulated Water and Sewerage Companies in England and Wales. Operating in Lowestoft they came to chat reducing single use plastic with ‘Refill’ and keeping rivers and streams clean by improving connections and stopping the wrong stuff going down our drains.
2. [Green Lady Eco Store](#) – selling ethically sourced reuse and long life solutions to reduce waste.
3. [Greenprint Forum](#) - a voluntary network facilitated by Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils to help deliver their business plan; specifically enabling community environmental action to improve lives and strengthen our economy. At this event the focus was on showing how unavoidable single use items like toilet roll tubes and wrapping can be reused for crafts and to encourage people to avoid waste where possible and where not to put the right things in the right bins.
4. [Groundwork](#) - a national network and international movement of independent Groundwork Trusts. Every Groundwork Trust is rooted in the area it serves. Each Trust’s programmes and services are tailored to the needs of partners and communities in their locality. At this event the focus was on delivering Anglian Water messages in providing help to people to reduce use of single use bags and to put things in the bin not down the toilet or sink or into nature and to highlight their support of the Refill Campaign.
5. [Kirkley People’s Forum](#) - resident volunteers focused on developing aspirations, priorities and projects for and on behalf of Kirkley and all residents of Kirkley can join.

6. [Suffolk Coast and Heaths](#) - 26 organisations work together to care for the 150km of legally protected countryside known as the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This AONB Partnership is coordinated and supported by the AONB team, who are hosted by Suffolk County Council. This event showcased some of their key publications and the work they are supporting to reduce plastic waste. Including the art installation by volunteer [Margaret Wyllie](#).
7. [Suffolk Master Composters](#) - community volunteers who in return for training and support help raise awareness of the benefits of composting, encourage more people to compost at home and support those who already do it. Their aim is to help people successfully produce their own soil improvers, which will in turn help reduce the amount of organic waste going to disposal and the amount of bagged compost needing to be bought.
8. VeGee Deli - Suffolk's first vegan deli, with a wide range of gluten-free options. You can find them at 1 London Road South, Lowestoft or call 01502 219956. They cater for events, pre-books or drop ins.

**Other organisations in attendance:**

East Suffolk Partnership

Environment Agency

East Suffolk Communities Team

Waveney Norse

**Many thanks to the very helpful staff at the [Kirkley Centre](#), to all those who attended, provided stalls, and joined us for the litter pick. Thank you Norse for collecting the rubbish and your helpful input during the day taking queries.**

**What can you do?**

- Make small changes at home like:
  - ❖ Using solid bars of soap, shampoo and conditioner.
  - ❖ Ask not to be given a plastic straw when you go out to eat or drink. You can alternatively buy a reusable straw if you have a need for one.
  - ❖ Use reusable coffee cups at cafés and carry water in a reusable bottle rather than a single use plastic bottle.

- ❖ Consider buying a bamboo toothbrush (but, always cut off the head if you want to reuse or compost and always store it horizontally so that it does not get wet and mouldy!) Or switch to a toothbrush that has a replaceable head.
- ❖ Buy toothpaste in glass jars with a metal lid (tabs or powder) instead of buying tooth paste tubes.
- ❖ Consider buying plastic free razor blades.
- ❖ Consider replacing tea bags with loose leaf tea and a strainer and ideally going to a store where you can refill an existing container rather than buying in single use packaging.
- ❖ Buy a reusable bees wax cloth wrap rather than using cling film – or avoid creating the need for it.
- ❖ See if it's possible to get milk delivered to your house in glass bottles rather than buying plastic milk cartons from convenience stores.
- ❖ Buy crisps and other snack foods in share bags and empty small portions into reusable containers rather than buying individual packets.
- ❖ Most importantly, before you buy any product ask yourself: 'Do I really need this?' and if you are making products ask 'does anyone really need this?'

### **The route taken on the litter pick**

Along the beach to CEFAS and back along London Road South, Kensington gardens through an alleyway adjacent to London Road South and to Kirkley Rise car park.

